

REMARKS

The Examiner maintains that it is unclear whether the word "between" refers to physical or logical location. Figure 1 clearly shows the claimed configuration. The authentication apparatus 40 is connected between (logically and/or physically) a first interconnecting device (e.g., interconnecting device 10a) and a second communication device (e.g., web server 60 or mail server 62). This configuration is clearly disclosed and described. Therefore, withdrawal of the object is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has identified a lack of antecedent basis in claim 16. Claim 16 is cancelled to avoid raising new issues and to otherwise simplify prosecution issues.

Reconsideration of the prior art rejection in view of U.S. Patent 6,005,939 (FORTENBERRY) is respectfully requested. FORTENBERRY does not show or suggest the claimed authentication apparatus. The authentication apparatus is "operable to control whether or not communication between said first and second communication devices is allowed". In FORTENBERRY, communication is already established with the public network/internet 200 when the passport server 212 is invoked. In contrast, the claimed authentication apparatus determines whether communication will be allowed. That is, the authentication apparatus is "operable to control whether or not communication between said first and second communication devices is allowed."

In a conventional communication system, any user can access the Internet via routers. Since a conventional router can access the communication line in accordance with the instruction of any user, the conventional router has a problem in that the user's communication line, which is accessed by the router, may be used improperly by any user, whether authorized or not, by merely connecting through the router.

Therefore, in order to overcome the above drawbacks, in a communication system of the present invention, as recited in the independent claims 1, 4, and 13, an authentication apparatus is used. As disclosed in paragraph [0033], the authentication apparatus (interconnecting device) controls whether communication is allowed between PCs and servers. Specifically, as disclosed in paragraph [0038], this feature can accomplish a tremendous advantage that only the user of the interconnecting device who signed up for the communication line can access the Internet network via the interconnecting device. Thus, it is possible to prevent an unfair use of the

communication line by a user of other than the user of the interconnecting device. More specifically, as disclosed in descriptions regarding Figure 1, an interconnecting device 10a (a first interconnecting device) obtains authentication information to be used for authentication of the user, and transmits the same to an interconnecting device 40 (authentication apparatus). Then, the authentication apparatus 40 authenticates the authentication information. When the authentication information is successful, the authentication apparatus enables communication between a first communication device (e.g., 20a, 22a, 20b, 22b) and a second communication device (e.g., 60, 62).

FORTENBERRY discloses a method and apparatus for allowing access to an Internet web site to conduct transactions on the Internet. In a communication system, when the authentication information of users connected to an Internet service provider was successful, the system enables communication between users and a web server. Specifically, the transactions are performed under the condition that any users are already connected to the network.

Thus, FORTENBERRY is quite different from the system of the present invention, such that only the user who signed up for the communication line can access the network.

FORTENTBERRY fails to show or suggest the claimed authentication apparatus. In particular, an authentication apparatus "operable to control whether or not communication between said first and second communication devices is allowed." Thus, FORTENBERRY cannot prevent an unfair use of a communication line by a user other than the user who signed up for the communication line.

In sum, all pending claims should now be in a condition for allowance. If there are any residual issues that need to be resolved prior to allowing the application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned.

Dated: November 6, 2006

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